

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention.

Reconsideration of the subject patent application in view of the present remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 is amended.

New claim 6 is added.

Specification

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it has more than one paragraph. The abstract has been amended to have one paragraph. Thus, the objection as it applies to the abstract is moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-5 are rejected under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueda et al (US 6,133,558; hereinafter "Ueda") in view of Yoshino et al (US 6,172,348; hereinafter "Yoshino").

Regarding claim 1, neither Ueda nor Yoshino, alone or in combination, discloses, teaches, or renders foreseeable that a temperature detection step for detecting that the measured

temperature has reached the melting temperature; and a steam supplying step for starting a steam supply when the melting temperature is detected in the temperature detection step. Ueda does not disclose the temperature detection step, as admitted by the Examiner in the Office Action. Also, Ueda does not disclose the steam supplying step for starting a steam supply **when the melting temperature is detected** in the temperature detection step. Ueda merely discloses that in order to provide a heating object after being thawed with humidity, an appropriate steam is supplied from steam generator (Ueda; column 5, lines 42-45), but does not disclose **the exact timing of starting the steam supply** which is when the melting temperature is detected in the temperature detection step. There is no disclosure in Ueda that the timing of starting the steam supply is governed by detecting the melting temperature of the frozen commodity. The Office Action states that Yoshino discloses the step of detecting the temperature of the frozen commodity. However, the claim 1 invention does not merely claim a step of detecting the temperature of the frozen commodity, but also claims a step of detecting that the measured temperature **has reached the melting temperature**. Yoshino merely discloses that the temperature sensor 26 detects the temperature of points of the food (Yoshino; column 18, lines 32-34). There is no disclosure in Yoshino that the temperature sensor 26 detects that the measured temperature has reached the melting temperature of the food and when the melting temperature is detected a steam supply is started. The melting temperature is defined in the present specification as "the temperature at which one part of the surface of the frozen commodity M begins to melt (the present specification; paragraph [0086], lines 1-4)." Yoshino does not disclose a step of detecting the melting temperature of the food and the use of the melting temperature to determine **the timing of starting the steam supply**. In fact, Yoshino is

silent about supplying a steam in the microwave at all. Accordingly, the combination of Ueda and Yoshino does not meet all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, the asserted combination of Ueda and Yoshino does not render claim 1 obvious. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection as it applies to claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5 which are dependent from claim 1 should be allowable for at least the same reason as claim 1. In addition, regarding claims 2 and 3, neither Ueda nor Yoshino, alone or in combination, discloses, teaches, or renders foreseeable that a weight evaluation step for evaluating the weight of the frozen commodity based on a temperature increase rate of the frozen commodity measured in the temperature detection step. Ueda does not disclose the weight evaluation step at all. Yoshino discloses the weight sensor 23, but there is no disclosure in Yoshino that the weight sensor 23 evaluates the weight of the frozen commodity based on a **temperature increase rate** of the frozen commodity measured in the temperature detection step. Yoshino merely discloses that the weight sensor 23 detects the weight of the food 6 (Yoshino; column 43, line 42-43), but is silent about any basis on which the weight sensor 23 detects the weight of the food 6.


Regarding new claim 6, neither Ueda nor Yoshino, alone or in combination, discloses, teaches, or renders foreseeable that the high frequency heating in the first high frequency heating step is stopped during the steam supplying step. Yoshino does not disclose the steam supplying step at all. Ueda merely discloses that the microwave output is reduced after passing the point A (Ueda; column 5, lines 26-27), but is silent about stopping the microwave output during the steam supplying step.

In consideration of the foregoing analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. NGB-40369.

Respectfully submitted,

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